

Time is running out on programs for Alaska's children

ACTION ALERT!

Final budget decisions are near - **DON'T WAIT!** Tell the legislative majorities to invest in children and continue Alaska's progress. Send an email, letter, or Public Opinion Message today!

5 examples of how House and Senate majorities halt or reverse progress

1 Less protection for children - Governor proposes five new troopers specifically to investigate child abuse. House rejects new troopers, cuts 23 existing troopers. Senate rejects new troopers, cuts 17 existing troopers and up to 30 support staff.

2 No help for foster families - Governor proposes \$909,000 to retain and attract foster families with a long overdue increase in daily payments to parents. House and Senate reject this increase and short-fund foster care and subsidized adoptions by \$4 million (House) and \$600,000 (Senate).

3 Alcohol scourge continues - Governor proposes \$4.7 million alcohol initiative to reduce waitlists for treatment, hire rural counselors, make other gains. Also proposes \$2.5 million in Smart Start to treat women alcohol abusers with children, get more help to juvenile drinkers. House and Senate reject almost all new investments. Senate also cuts existing alcohol programs by \$4.3 million (20 percent of current funding).

4 No gains for early childhood - Governor proposes \$100,000 to fund early literacy program and \$500,000 to expand Head Start (these state funds would capture up to \$2 million from federal government). House and Senate reject these investments.

5 Children still at risk - Governor proposes modest new Smart Start investments to assist children in state custody, respond to more reports of harm, reunify families, fight inhalant abuse, make other critical improvements. House and Senate reject Smart Start investments. House also cuts 32 child-protection workers.

Examples of Smart Start progress

- 21,500 more children and 4,000 more pregnant women have basic health care
- 22 percent more reports of harm against children fully investigated
- Tough new law protects children
- Immunization rate up from two-thirds to more than three-fourths of two year olds
- Faster adoptions, 1,200 fewer children lingering in state custody

These programs save money

- Every \$1 spent on prenatal care can save more than \$3 in postnatal costs
- Many prisoners report being abused as children, so any reduction in abuse will save on the \$148 million Alaska spends annually for the Department of Corrections
- Every \$1 spent on a regular schedule of vaccinations saves \$7.40 later in reduced medical costs of illness and disease
- By speeding up adoptions, the state avoided \$5 million in foster care costs
- Every \$1 invested in quality early care and education saves \$7 later in reduced costs for crime, welfare, and other social services

It's not too late to act

Tell lawmakers today to solve these problems and support child protection in Alaska. Tell them you know budget fixes are possible until the final hours of the legislative session. Tell them you'll be watching.

Contact Your Legislator

Call your local Legislative Information Office to submit a Public Opinion Message

Email your Legislators

- Representative_Firstname_Lastname@legis.state.ak.us
- Senator_Firstname_Lastname@legis.state.ak.us